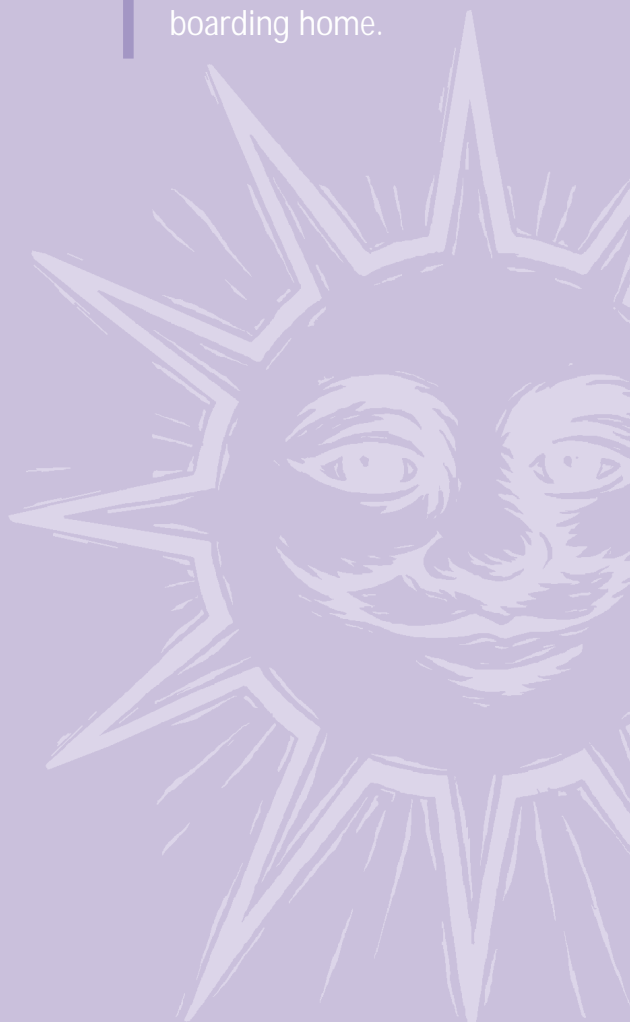


# Choosing Care in an Adult Family Home or Boarding Home

Long-Term  
*Care*



Are you looking for long-term care for yourself or another person? This booklet provides a quick reference on how to find and choose an adult family home or boarding home.



AGING AND ADULT SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



Are you looking for care for yourself or another person? There are many different things for you and your loved ones to talk and sort through, services available, and terms that will be new. This brochure offers some steps to take and questions to ask to **help you get the information you need** to know if an adult family home or boarding home is the right option for you.

**Six steps to  
making long-term  
care decisions:**

**Step 1:**

Talk About Life  
Changes

**Step 2:**

Review Needs

**Step 3:**

Get the Information  
You Need

**Step 4:**

Get a List of Adult  
Family Homes and  
Boarding Homes

**Step 5:**

Set up Visits

**Step 6:**

Make a Decision

Today, more and more people who require additional care are exploring the option of moving to an adult family home or boarding home. For many, these residential care alternatives offer peace of mind that the care they need is available. This brochure outlines six steps that will help you get the information you need to decide if an adult family home or boarding home is the right choice for you.

## *Step 1: Talk About Life Changes*

The first step in making long-term care decisions is for everyone involved to overcome their reluctance to talk about it. Many people put off this dialogue because they are uncomfortable or unsure about how to bring it up. The person needing additional care may be reluctant to admit their changing needs. Family members can have differing opinions about what should happen. Miles can separate concerned loved ones.

No matter what the circumstance, fear and discomfort leave everyone unprepared if a crisis occurs. Start talking before an unexpected life crisis teaches you all the things you wished you had known ahead of time.

## *Tips for Talking About Life Changes*

- Set aside time to talk when everyone is rested and prepared.
- The person requiring additional care and support should have a central role in determining what is needed and how it is accomplished.
- Allow each person to talk without interruptions or criticizing.
- Understand emotions are a big part of this discussion. Be **patient** with the amount of time that may be needed to get things out on the table.
- Remember it normally takes more than one conversation to figure out what to do. Many small steps are better than one huge leap that leaves everyone upset and more confused.
- Allow everyone time to process the information. If helping a loved one – remember you are making **recommendations** not decisions.

The person who will live in the adult family home or boarding home has the last word about the facility; their wishes and preferences are the most important part of this process.

## *Step 2: Review Needs*

Carefully consider what care and help you (or your loved one) require. Make a list of medical, physical and social needs.

### ***For example:***

- Does someone need to do laundry and cooking?
- Is help needed to get to the bathroom or dressing?
- Are regular medication reminders necessary?

## ***Step 3: Getting the Information You Need***

Much of the initial information gathering begins on the telephone. There are so many resources available it can be hard to know where to begin. It is helpful to know that it is a time consuming process for everyone. Plan accordingly.

### ***Who to Call***

Those people who may be eligible for state funding assistance should contact their local Home and Community Services (HCS) office. A HCS staff representative will come to your home and help assess what additional personal care tasks are needed and the individual's preferences for this care. Once this initial assessment is completed, HCS staff also help to identify and get services to support the most independent living arrangement possible. Having this neutral third-party to help sort through these things is very helpful.

Call your regional HCS office (listed on back cover) to get the number of your local HCS office.

If no state financial assistance is required at this time, contact the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) office. To find the number for the AAA office and other senior resources, look in the phone book Yellow Pages under

“Senior Citizens” Services or “Disabled Person’s Assistance”.

Additional resources can be found in the phone book in the State of Washington Government Pages blue section. Look for listings of interest to you under the Department of Social and Health Services.

### ***Other Helpful Resources***

For people over 60 years of age, another excellent resource is the Senior Information and Assistance (I&A) office. I&A provides local information about senior services in the community. I&A staff can assist with such things as the cost of services, who you should call, how to fill out forms and how to find out about benefits you may have. To find the office nearest you, check your telephone directory Yellow Pages under “Senior Citizens Services”. Ask when you call what other services or assistance they may be able to provide.

### ***Some Definitions...***

**Adult Family Homes** are residential homes licensed to care for two to six residents. They provide room, board, laundry, necessary supervision, assistance with activities of daily living, personal care, and social services. Some provide nursing care or may specialize in serving people with mental health problems, developmental disabilities, or dementia.

**Boarding Homes** A boarding home is a facility in a community setting licensed to care for seven or more residents. Boarding homes provide board, help with activities of daily living, and assume general

Spend time  
learning about  
the different  
services from  
people  
experienced  
with them.



responsibility for the safety and well-being of the resident. Some boarding homes offer limited nursing services and others may specialize in serving people with mental health problems, developmental disabilities, or dementia.

Boarding homes that contract to provide care for state-funded clients offer one or more of the following services:

■ **Assisted Living**

- Private apartments, with an emphasis on privacy, independence, and personal choice
- Limited nursing services
- Help with medications and personal care

■ **Adult Residential Care (ARC)**

- Help with medications and personal care
- Residents may need/receive limited supervision

■ **Enhanced Adult Residential Care (EARC)**

- Same services as ARC
- No more than two people will share a room
- Limited nursing care must be provided

## *Step 4: Get a List of Adult Family Homes and Boarding Homes*

There is a wide range of adult family homes and boarding homes in Washington State. To begin finding the home that is a good fit for you (or your loved one), choose the geographic area preferred and get a list of the homes in that vicinity. There are many resources available to help get this list.

### ***Internet***

The Washington State Aging and Adult Services website has excellent resources for finding adult family homes and boarding homes in your area. For those people with access to a computer, visit [www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov](http://www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov). You can immediately produce a list of all adult family homes and boarding homes sorted by Washington State zip code or county.

This list provides the phone numbers and addresses of the facilities in the locale requested. It also lists what contract (if any) the facility holds with the State to provide care for state-funded residents. Refer to page 5 for helpful definitions of the terms used for each type of contract a facility may hold.

If you don't have a computer at home, check with your local library for access to one. This search can also be done by anyone – even if they live out of state – with access to the Internet. Give the person doing the search the web address listed above and the Washington State geographic area to be explored.



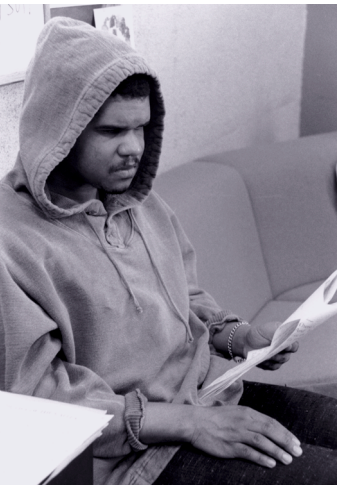
## ***Faxback Directories and Placement Information***

If you have access to a fax machine, call 1-800-372-0186. You will be directed through a series of telephone prompts to select the type of facility listings you want. You can get listings for boarding homes, adult family homes and nursing homes in any zip code or county in Washington State. You can also select listings of adult family homes where a language other than English is primary and with specific special features like wheelchair accessibility. You will then receive a fax back with all facilities that match your criteria.

HCS and AAA local offices can also provide listings of available adult family homes and boarding homes in their area.

### ***Step 5: Set up Visits***

Once there is a list of possible homes, you (or someone you designate) need to visit facilities that match your needs. This point is very important. VISIT as many potential facilities as you can at different times of the day. Although setting up these visits may appear time consuming, in the long run it is worth taking this



time to make the best decision. Visiting facilities helps you compare the options available and get a good feel for what is available.

Explore the reputation of each facility you visit. Here are several resources to help you do so.

- Ask a representative from the facility you are visiting to:
  - show you the last *state inspection report*. This report will give you insight into any potential problem areas of the home. It might also highlight positive things that are important to you.
  - give you a copy of the facility's admission agreement. The *facility's admission agreement* is required to state what services are and are not provided at the facility. This will give you a clear understanding of what the facility does and does not offer. Take a copy home to read thoroughly.
  - provide references or numbers to contact former residents or their family members.
- To find out if there have been complaints lodged against the facility in the past, call the DSHS Field Manager in your area. Field Managers are responsible for inspecting and licensing these facilities. To get the name and telephone number of the Field Manager in your geographic area, call the AASA HelpLine at 1-800-422-3263.

- Contact the local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program for your area. Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program representatives are advocates for residents of adult care facilities. They work to resolve problems of individual residents and to bring about changes at the local, state and national levels to improve care. They can be an excellent source of information. To find the office nearest you, call their toll-free number at 1-800-562-6028.

### *Step 6: Make a Decision*

The following checklist will help you ask questions and get information to make your decision. Don't hesitate to ask as many questions as you need to make a choice that works for you. Although there are many questions here, the most important thing to ask is, "Does the adult family home or boarding home meet *my* needs?"



## ○ Administration, Costs, and Finances

- What are the basic rates (it's a good idea to get this information in writing)?
  - What services are covered by these rates?
  - Are there charges additional to these rates?
  - What are the payment policies?
  - What is the refund policy if someone leaves before the end of a month?
  - What is the policy for rate increases?
- How long has the current administration been in place?
- What is the policy for accepting Medicaid or transferring to Medicaid at a later date?

## ○ Surroundings

- As you arrive, do you like the location and outward appearance?
- Do residents socialize with each other and appear happy and comfortable?
- Are you able to talk with residents about how they like the residence and staff?
- Do the residents look like people you will want to live with?
- Is the facility close to friends and relatives?
- Is the facility on a noisy street?

- Are there shops, a library, a park, or other amenities within walking distance?
- Is the facility close to activities you enjoy?
- Is the facility on a bus line?
- Is there an outside area to sit, walk, or garden?

## ○ Staff

- Are staff suitably dressed, personable, and outgoing?
- Do the staff members treat residents with respect and dignity?
- Do staff members treat each other in a professional manner?
- Who will provide the needed personal care?
- Who will provide any nursing care?
- Is staff available to meet scheduled and unscheduled needs?
- What language does most of the staff speak?
- Is there frequent turnover of staff?
- Will staff plan for your activities, such as a hair appointment or regular poker games?
- How flexible will the staff be in working out a plan of care with you to meet your needs?



## ○ Physical Setting

- Is the floor plan easy to follow?
- Are doorways, hallways, and rooms accommodating to wheelchairs and walkers?
- Are there hand rails to help with walking and in the bathrooms?
- Are cupboards and shelves easy to reach?
- Are there nonskid floors and firm carpets to assist walking?
- Does the facility have good natural and artificial lighting?
- Is the facility clean, free of odors, and well heated and cooled?
- Does the facility meet your standards of cleanliness?
- Is the facility free from obvious hazards?
- Are the facility's rooms clean, safe, and adequate for your needs?
- Will you have free use of the kitchen?
  - Activity rooms?
  - Toilet facilities?
  - Dining room?
  - Grounds?
- Can residents smoke in their rooms or in public spaces?
- What pieces of furniture are provided?

- Is there a chair, a reading lamp, and an overhead light?
- Is there a sit-down shower?
- Can you bring along some of your own furniture or other personal items?

## ○ Services and Activities

- Are doctors, nurses, and emergency assistance available if needed?
- Are emergency procedures clearly posted throughout the facility?
- What is the facility's policy regarding the level of care they will provide?
- Who will take you to doctors' appointments?
- Can residents arrange for transportation on fairly short notice?
- How will needed specialized services, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, or recreational therapy, be arranged?
- What recreational activities are available?



- Will you be able to attend religious services of your choice?
- Does each resident get a copy of house policies and resident rights?
- What are the policies regarding visitors and pets?
- Must everyone get up and eat at the same time or is the facility flexible?
- Are there regularly planned activities that you will enjoy?



## ○ Food

- Is the food pleasing, nutritious, adequate, and attractively served?
- Are snacks available?
- Are there specific meal times, or can you snack throughout the day or evening?
- Will the facility meet your dietary or cultural food preferences? Can residents request special foods?



## ***Once a Decision is Made***

Planning and information gathering does not stop once you've made your decision to move into an adult family home or boarding home. Moving is a major life change. To help ease the transition, use some of the same steps defined in the first part of this booklet:

1. Talk through the changes that will need to be made;
2. Ask staff at the new residence for help with any questions you have;
3. Get any other additional information you need;
4. Make a plan of what needs to happen and when.

Moving to an adult family home or boarding home can mean letting go of a lifetime of possessions and a familiar way of life. Some people are relieved and look forward to fewer responsibilities while others find it an emotional and vulnerable time. Either way, the person making the move needs the full support of family and loved ones and should have the central role in determining what happens and when.

Once the move has happened, anticipate a normal period of adjustment. The first few weeks can be the hardest as routines get established and things become more familiar. It is important to discuss any concerns or questions with the adult family home or boarding home

operator. Be sure to ask for what you need. The staff may be able to make changes that will better meet what works best for you.

As a resident of an adult family home or boarding home, you also have certain consumer rights guaranteed by law. The owner or staff at your new residence should inform you of these rights. If not, ask.

### ***Final Thoughts***

Making major life changes requires thoughtful planning. By following the six steps outlined in this brochure, you will get the information you need and be prepared to make the best long-term care choice for you or your loved one.

Many families are also unfamiliar with the many services available that can help their loved one stay at home. For more information on these options and services, the Department of Social and Health Services offers a booklet, *Options, You Have a Choice* (Publication Number DSHS 22-958X). See page 17 for ordering information.

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*It is the policy of the Department of Social and Health Services the people should not be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, age, or disability.*



### ***Guide to Choosing Care in an Adult Family Home or Boarding Home***

To order more copies of this booklet or other DSHS publications, send, FAX, or e-mail a written request to the DSHS Warehouse. Include the brochure name, publication number, and the quantity needed. There is no charge.

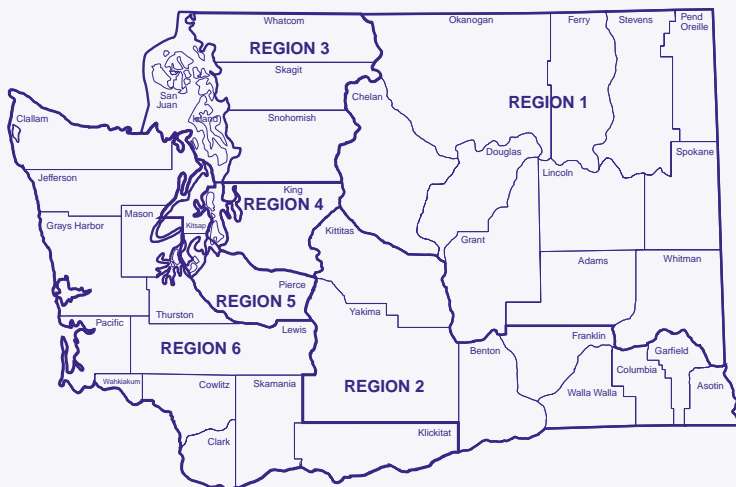
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# Home and Community Services Regional Phone Numbers

See map to find the region you live in. Call the number listed for your region.



## **Region 1 1-800-459-0421**

Spokane, Grant, Okanogan, Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Lincoln, Ferry, Stevens, Whitman, and Pend Oreille Counties

## **Region 2 1-800-822-2097**

Yakima, Kittitas, Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin Counties

## **Region 3 1-800-487-0416**

Snohomish, Skagit, Island, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties

## **Region 4 1-800-346-9257**

King County

## **Region 5**

Pierce County 1-800-442-5129  
Kitsap County 1-800-422-7114

## **Region 6 1-800-462-4957**

Thurston, Mason, Lewis, Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Skamania, Klickitat, and Clark Counties

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This booklet and many other DSHS/AASA publications and materials can be found on the Aging and Adult Services Administration website:  
[www.dshs.aasa.wa.gov](http://www.dshs.aasa.wa.gov)



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Photos by Carole Huff



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